6: Gazetteer G-5 (ca. 1840-1883) 1883-4 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

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the face is always marked with lines and wrinkles. In fact, none of them can be said to be handsome, and the old women are quite hideous; the only redeeming point is the look of honesty and smiling good humour to be recognised in almost every countenance. In those parts of Láhaul in which there is most admixture of Hindú blood, the blending of the two types is very clearly distinguishable.

General character of the people of Láhaul and Spiti.

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Mr. Lyall thus describes the character of the people of Láhaul and Spiti:—

"The character of the people is solid and conservative; their power of united action is considerable, as will be seen from the description I have given of the arrangements in force with regard to *begár* and common expenses; they seem to me not quick-witted, but eminently shrewd and sensible. Though they show great respect to their hereditary nobles and headmen, they would, I believe, combine at once to resist tyranny or infringement of custom on their part. The headmen have certainly been hitherto very careful not to offend public opinion. They have few ideas in respect of manners; when holding a court or a meeting, I have often seen the whole assembly burst into a roar of laughter on my making a mistake in the language of a ludicrous character, and a man would fill and light his pipe under my nose on similar occasions without thinking of asking leave. But these same people answered all my questions very carefully, and carried out my orders with great fidelity. Murder, theft, or violent assaults are almost unknown among them,* and they seem to me to be fair, and often kind, in their dealings with each other; on the other hand, I agree with Mr. Heyde in considering the standard of sobriety and chastity among them to be exceptionally low. Drinking is a common vice in all cold countries, and the want of chastity is accounted for by the custom of polyandry in Láhaul and celibacy of younger sons in Spiti, which leave a large proportion of the women in both countries unmarried all their lives. In spite of these frailties the Botis seem to me (like the Scotch country people, who are also subject to them) to be an eminently religious race; they seem to think that to withstand these particular temptations is to be a saint, and that in ordinary men who do not aim so high, to succumb is quite venial. The lives of their saints are full of the most austere acts of virtue and mortification of the flesh commencing from the cradle, which are certainly calculated to make the ordinary mortal abandon the task of imitation in despair; and their religion, though it fails here, has, in my opinion, considerable influence for good in their minds in other respects; more at least than the forms of religion practised by other races, Hindú or Muhammadan, have at the present day in the parts of Hindústan with which I am acquainted. This is not surprising, as the moral teaching to be found in the Buddhist books is of a very high kind: the love of one's neighbour is one of its principles, and this is extended to include even the brute creation. So, again, though good works are balanced against sins, yet their worthlessness, when not done in a humble and reverent spirit, is recognised. In regard to veracity I have found them superior to Hindús; in hearing law

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* Of late years the people of lower Pattan, in Láhaul, have got a character for picking and stealing from merchandise in their hands as carriers; but they are a race apart, of mixed blood and religion, descended for the most part from criminals from other countries, who took refuge here from justice in former days. Besides they have been demoralised lately by opportunity and impunity.

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6: Gazetteer G-5 (ca. 1840-1883) 1883-4 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

157 Chapter III, C. — Tribes and Castes and Leading Families.

suits I have very rarely had to call witnesses: cross examination usually brought about a perfect agreement as to facts."

Mr. Anderson, however, remarks that the people have altered for the worse in respect of veracity since Mr. Lyall's time.

SECTION C.—TRIBES AND CASTES AND LEADING FAMILIES.

564 144 Caste in Láhaul.

Mr. Lyall, writing in 1869, thus describes the castes in Láhaul:—

"The distribution into castes is as follows:—Thákurs 216, Bráhmans 502, Kanets 4,566, Dágis 360, Lohárs 277, Barárás 10, Sunyárs 3, Hensís 17. The Thákurs are the *jáṣirdárs* and their offshoots; they are beginning to assert a Rájpút origin, but, in point of fact, are more or less pure Botis or Mongolians by blood. The Bráhmans are only found in Pattan and are descendants of emigrants from Chamba, Láhaul and other countries to the south. The so-called Láhaul Kanets are a mixed race, but the Mongolian element predominates over the Indian. Many of those who live in Pattan are, no doubt, descendants of Kanet settlers from Kúlu and Bangáhal; the rest, and the inhabitants of Gára and Rangloi, are pure Botiás or nearly so; the remaining tribes are also of mixed race; they constitute the lower classes who do not hold regular allotments of land, and subsist in part by serving for wages or by handicrafts. The Dágis have probably the least admixture of Botiá blood of any race in Láhaul; they came from Kúlu in the time of the Rájas, and now act as musicians in the temples and in some of the monasteries. Only a few of the Lohárs now act as blacksmiths; the Barárás are basket-makers; the Hensís are professional musicians, whose daughters act as dancing girls. Every year a number of the Kanets of Pattan spend the winter in washing for gold at Cheling, in Ladákh or on the Zánskár river; they pay a tax of one or two rupees per head to the Ladákh Government, and earn on an average four tolas or a little more (—1½ to 2 oz.) of pure gold in the season; they form themselves into companies of fifteen or twenty men, and appoint captains of each gang. All classes speak Tibetan, but that spoken in Pattan contains a great admixture of Hindi; each valley also has a distinct dialect of its own. Generally speaking, in Botiá or Tibetan countries, there are no distinctions of caste; there is a class distinction between the agriculturists, who form the great mass of the population, and the artizans, musicians, and others who live by wages; but though this prevents intermarriage, it does not separate the classes in the way that the rules of caste separate different tribes of Hindús. Spiti still resembles other Tibetan countries in this respect. But the people of Láhaul are rapidly adopting the caste system among other Hindú customs. There are only seven regular *lámás* in Láhaul, that is, *lámás* who live always in the monasteries and have no other occupation; but there are 110 of the landholders who own land and cultivate, and have very little of the monk about them, but have taken a vow and are attached as *lámás* to some monastery or other. These are found chiefly in the Gárá country, where also there are seventy-one nuns known by the names of *chomo*. These monks and nuns can all read and write the Tibetan character; one nun can calculate an eclipse: the same building serves for both monastery and nunnery, but is only fully occupied in the winter."

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6: Gazetteer G-5 (ca. 1840-1883) 1883-4 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

Chapter IV, B. Live-Stock.

Dhár or sheep-runs of Gaddí and Kolí shepherds in Láhaul.

The Láhaulís keep only a few sheep and goats, as the snow lies too long and too deep in the winter for the flocks to live out of doors as they do in Ladákh. For a very long time, therefore, the upper ends of the main valleys, which are uninhabited, and the grounds high above the villages in the inhabited parts, have been utilized by the Gaddí shepherds of Kángra and Chamba, and the Kolí shepherds of Kúlu. The snow begins to disappear in these places about the beginning of June; the shepherds do not ordinarily enter Láhaul before the end of that month, and they leave it again early in September, by which time the frost is beginning to be biting, and the rainy season in the outer Himalayan country has come to an end. In the fine dry climate in Láhaul the sheep escape the foot rot and other diseases which constantly attack flocks kept during the rains on the southern slopes of the outer Himalayas. The sheep arrive wretchedly thin, but by the time they are ready to leave [illegible] in splendid condition. A short fine grass of a dull bluish-green colour called *siru*, is their favourite food; *mat* and *morár* are names of other good kinds of grasses. The goats depend very much on the leaves and twigs of the birch and bush willow. The Gaddí shepherds are much more careful and energetic shepherds than the Kolís; they may be seen herding their goats on the face of tremendous precipices; with one woollen coat and a blanket they sleep out exposed to an icy wind, and take no harm; sometimes, however, the cold drives them to creep into the huddled-up flocks and pass the night with two or three sheep on top of them for a coverlid. Their sheep are reputed strong and hardy above those of any other shepherds. People as far away as the Bhotia traders of Kumáon, buy a great many every year at high prices as beasts of burden for the trade over the great snowy range between Kumáon and Tibet. These grazing grounds or sheep-runs of foreign shepherds in Láhaul are called *dhárs* or *bans* or *nigáhrs*. A *dhár* or *ban* is often sub-divided into several *vand*, each *vand* containing enough ground to graze one full flock or *khandáh* of sheep and goats. Each *dhár* has its more or less precisely fixed boundaries, and the *wariś* or title to it, is understood to have originated in a grant from a Rája of Kúlu, or a Thákur of Láhaul. Among the Gaddís some transfers by gift or sale appear to have taken place, and in several cases the original family which obtained the grant has long ceased to use the *dhár*; but in recognition of its old title the shepherd now in possession has to halt a day on the journey back and let his sheep manure the fields of the original owner, with whose permission his occupation commenced. Whether the original owner could now turn out an old occupant of this kind is a doubtful question. The grey-beards seem to think that he could send up any number of his own sheep, but could not put in a third person to the detriment of the old occupant. The title of the Kolí shepherds to their *dhárs* is the same as that by which they hold their *nigáhrs* in Kúlu. In some few instances a *dhár* was granted to a *wazír*, or person of influence, as a personal favour; but, as a general rule, they seem to have been given to the men of certain hamlets or *páṭis* collectively, though perhaps the *patta* or deed of grant contained only one man's name. There are many fine runs in the uninhabited part of the Chandra valley above *purána* Koksar, which,

6: Gazetteer G-5 (ca. 1840-1883) 1883-4 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

Chapter IV, C.

Occupations, Industries and Commerce.

Dhár or sheep-runs of Gaddí and Kolí shepherds in Láhaul.

before we took the country, were seldom if ever used. Bakhtáwar of Lála, a leading shepherd of Kángra, obtained from Mr. Barnes the privilege of grazing the unoccupied runs in this country. An almost equally large tract at the head of the Bhága valley has been held for generations by another Gaddí family, which obtained a similar grant from the Thákur of Kyelang. Both these families have of late years begun to take a fee from the numerous shepherds who join them in grazing these lands. The runs held by the Kolí (or Kúlu) shepherds all lie between *purána* Koksar and Ghondla, in the Chandra valley. The Gaddí shepherds pay one or more sheep for each run to the Thákur of the *kothí* or to the *négi* or *wazír*. This tax is known as the *kar*, or in the Láhauli language as *rigatal*. In most cases the amount first fixed seems to have remained unchanged ever after. The Rája of Kúlu excused the Kolí shepherds from this tax, as they paid one anna per head per annum on all sheep and goats, which was collected in Kúlu. The Láhaulís now wish to see the Kolí shepherds taxed like the Gaddís; but the former argue that Mr. Barnes at Settlement included an equivalent for all grazing fees, whether in Kúlu or Láhaul, in their assessment of the land-revenue. Most of the Gaddí shepherds also give a sheep or two under the name of *bhaggati* to the men of the village next below their run. Such sheep are sacrificed and eaten in a village feast at which the shepherds attend. The fee appears to have been originally given freely to secure good will, but it is now considered a right, which could be enforced. Where the grazing ground above a village is of small extent, it is all the *chárá* or private grazing of the villagers, into which they do not permit the foreign shepherds to intrude; but in some years they permit a stray flock to squat there for a consideration. The flocks from Chamba mostly enter Láhaul by the Kukti pass, which descends into Jhobrang *kothí*. The passage of so many is something of a grievance, so by old custom the shepherds pay the men of the *kothí* one sheep per *ban* or *dhár* under the name of *batokará*. In the same way they pay toll for crossing certain *jhúlas*, or swinging bridges, to the men of the villages who erect them, under the name of *slokará*. For instance, the Jhobrang men take one sheep per *vand*, or division of a *ban*, from all who cross their *jhúla*.

The Gaddí or Kolí shepherds never penetrated to Spiti; many of them would be glad now to be allowed to graze in the upper end of the valley, but the Spiti men strongly oppose their being admitted, on the grounds that the grass is scanty, and all required for their own flocks and herds. There is one solitary sheep-run on the Spiti side of the Kanzám pass known as Máran or Shitíká, which is held by men of Jagatsukh *phátí* in Kúlu, who usually let it to a Gaddí shepherd.

SECTION C.—OCCUPATIONS, INDUSTRIES AND COMMERCE.

Occupations.

The Láhaulís are very industrious; they work harder than the people of Kúlu, and are generally more intelligent. This may be

6: Gazetteer G-5 (ca. 1840-1883) 1883-4 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

Chapter IV, C. Occupations, Industries and Commerce. Occupations.

the result of greater intercourse with the world, for their geographical position made them the principal carriers between India and Tibet. Many of them leave their homes for the winter, which they spend in Kúlu or in Simla, engaging themselves as labourers, and that even when they are in fair circumstances. They bring back money, but it is not spent on luxuries. Their food, however, has improved, more meat being eaten now than before. The men engage for the most part in trade, while the women attend to the cultivation, carry loads, and do most of the hard work in Láhaul itself.

Handicrafts.

The handicraftsmen of Spiti are the cleverest of the Kúlu subdivision. Captain Harcourt mentions their steel bits, buckles and stirrups as specially worthy of note; and Mr. Louis Dane remarks that the puzzle locks made by the Spiti blacksmiths are very ingenious. The Spiti cloth, too, is particularly good. It is of several descriptions. The strongest and thickest is made in narrow lengths furred or flushed on one side, and is very durable and wonderfully cheap. A second variety is rather fine and more expensive, while a third, woven from goat's-hair, is in much demand among European residents in Kúlu. Moorcroft records that "2,752 pieces of cloth are annually fabricated in Spiti, of which 1,600 are used in home consumption, and the rest exported to the extent of 13,140 yards." This was written in 1820, but Captain Harcourt imagines "that the manufacture has not at all retrograded. Shoes," he continues, "are imported into both Spiti and Láhaul from the plains, but winter boots are made in Spiti. Sheep-skins with the wool on are prepared very skilfully both in Spiti and Láhaul."

Commerce.

The Láhaulís are the most enterprising traders of the Kúlu subdivision. Collecting their merchandise from Ladákh and the countries of Central Asia, they pass annually in large numbers towards the close of the summer into Kúlu, driving before them flocks of sheep and goats, on the backs of which their wares are packed. The principal items of their trade are borax, *pashm*, or shawl-wool, raw and worked into cloth (*pattu*). These they sell in Kúlu, buying for the return journey in the spring, brass and copper vessels, sugar, wheat, rice, tobacco, dried apricots from Balti, pepper, ginger, turmeric, garlic, and onions. The winter they spend in Kúlu. Mr. Lyall remarks that "at the present day the Láhaulís trade almost entirely with the people of Rúpshú in Ladákh and Rudokh in Tibet. Borax, *pashm* and wool are the principal imports; they say they find the trade with Léh and countries beyond unprofitable. In the summer large flocks of sheep from Rúpshú of the big breed called Haniá are driven to Dárcha, in Láhaul, and there shorn; the Láhaulís meet the shepherds there, and exchange grain, &c., for wool at certain customary rates of barter."

The people of Spiti are less enterprising, and dislike leaving their valley. Occasionally, however, parties of men set off for Ladákh, Basáhir and Kúlu, and there dispose of their wares, receiving payment either in money or kind. The exports are cereals, manufactured cloth, half-bred *yáks* and *yák's* tails. The imports are salt, madder, tobacco, tea from Lhásá, sheep's wool, turquoises, amber, waterpails

Beyond the High Himalayas

When we made camp the Big Dipper had dropped from sight and millions of new and strange stars were out. The cold wind had died. The faint roar of the Tsarap filled the canyon. The muleteers sat around a small fire of horse manure, laughing and talking. After a while Rup Singh came over for a conference.

"Make believe you are talking with Uncle Joe Stalin," I said to Rahul. "Be firm and precise."

In half an hour Rahul came over to my sleeping bag.

"Everything is wonderful," he said. "The Spirit of Satan is in a good mood. He knows he can't hold us up, for I refused to increase the rate of pay, and I gave him a lecture on morality. I did, however, agree that we would camp early tomorrow at Chakchu and give him the rest of the day off. But I made him agree to deliver us in Leh ten days from now—August 16. That's fast travel, for we stop two days at Hemis Monastery, and we are now 120 miles from Leh."

Thereafter Rup Singh was a happy, carefree, smiling young man. No shadow ever crossed his face all the way to Leh.

Three days later we were discussing the transformation at Pagmur.

"You are the foreigner in Asia," Rahul finally said. "And Rup Singh is the kind of a man who has to find out what kind of mettle the foreigner has."

"He won't go on strike again?"

"No. He's found out he can't scare you or blackmail you. And, moreover, from now on he would rather go to Leh than to Kyelang."

"Why?"

"Simple arithmetic. We're now closer to Leh." And then Rahul laughingly added, "You can with safety rely even on the word of the Spirit of Satan when your program matches his self-interest."

12: Douglas T-3 (1951)1953 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

years they charged four annas (five cents); now their uniform rate is one rupee (twenty cents). [548]

Leh barely keeps alive. The demands of its native population bring some life to the markets. But Leh will shrink to a tiny village on that volume of trade. To date it has been saved by its Indian Army garrison, whose purchasing power keeps the ancient city alive. But once that artificial stimulant is removed, Leh will shrivel. There are projects for development of Ladakh. It is found, for example, that drug herbs grow well there and have an extraordinarily high alkaloid content. Kashmir is promoting the use of Ladakh for growing drug herbs on a commercial scale. Unless Kashmir undertakes a bold economic and social program in Ladakh, Leh will soon become as much a relic of the past as the gaunt and empty castle of the King that looks down on the old capital of Little Tibet.

The people of Leh do not seem to know the worries of which I speak. They have little; they expect no more; they are happy with their lot. They are friendly and cheerful, simple and uncomplicated. I stayed with them and came to know their simple faith. The deities of the passes, of the rivers, of the valleys are real to them. So are their fears and superstitions. They are gentle people, and poor beyond belief, held closely to their faith by stern lamas.

The beautiful women in Leh are the young ones in their teens or twenties. A woman, by the time she is thirty, has usually faded. She carries the work of the house, the weight of the children, the burden of the fields. By forty she is old, with no buoyancy left. But the young lady knows the gaiety of hope, the laughter of dreams. Such a girl was Zila. She wore a chic sheepskin over her shoulders, the fur side under. The fleece had been washed and combed and made to spray out along the edges of the garment and over her shoulders. These streamers of wool against Zila's dark dress, like her beautiful teeth against her dark lips, gave her a rare beauty.

I met Zila at the Moravian Mission at Leh, a mission estab-